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SUBJECT: BULGARIA: 2009 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: SECSTATE 109980

¶1. (SBU) Bulgaria remains a staunch ally in the fight against terrorism, and the USG enjoys strong cooperation from the Government of Bulgaria. No significant acts of terrorism occurred in Bulgaria in 2009. Bulgaria is not a sponsor of terrorism and does not provide a safe haven to terrorist organizations. Bulgaria has ratified all major international instruments on terrorism, extradition, and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

¶2. (SBU) During 2009, the Bulgarian government worked closely with us to prevent acts of terrorism against United States citizens in Bulgaria and elsewhere. This included information sharing on potential terrorist threats and a heightened level of protection for USG facilities. The Bulgarian government does not provide any kind of support for international terrorism, terrorists, or terrorist groups.

¶3. (SBU) Bulgaria continues to nominate members of its counterterrorism team to participate in USG-provided counterterrorism training. During 2009, 29 Bulgarians attended USG-sponsored counterterrorism training courses within the context of the Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program, administered by the Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation. This training included courses in all aspects of counterterrorism including, intelligence, security, operations, legal, and civilian-military cooperation. In July 2009, 15 analysts from the Defense Information Service received a two-day seminar on terrorist network analysis and terrorist finance. The course was sponsored by EUCOM J-2 and taught by analysts from the Joint Analysis Center in Molesworth, United Kingdom.

¶4. (SBU) Bulgaria's participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom ended in December, 2008. Bulgaria continues to participate in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. It has approximately 470 service members in Afghanistan, with the bulk (270) guarding the perimeter and an entry control point at Kandahar Airfield. At our request, Bulgaria added its first Operational Mentor and Liaison Team in February and agreed to add a second. It has also agreed to field a new Role Two Medical Facility that is expected to consist of around 75 personnel, including 40 medical staff (but it needs financial support to make this a reality). Over the longer term, Bulgaria is interested in consolidating its forces to form a single battalion-sized force of 400-500

soldiers. On a yearly basis since 2004, Bulgaria has deployed a frigate in support of the Mediterranean Operation Active Endeavor (OAE). OAE's mission is to conduct maritime operations in the OAE area of operations to demonstrate NATO's resolve to help deter, defend, disrupt, and protect against terrorist activity.

¶5. (SBU) The U.S. and Bulgaria are signatories to a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) agreement which formalizes and strengthens U.S.-Bulgarian cooperation to prevent the spread of WMD and mitigate the impact of any incident or accident involving nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological components. Under the auspices of this agreement, the U.S. is expected to provide approximately USD three million by 2013 for training and equipment for border guards, customs officials, national police, and first responders. Both countries are also co-signatories on the Second Line of Defense agreement to install radiation detection equipment at airports, seaports and land border crossings to deter, detect, and interdict the smuggling of radiological materials. Under this agreement the U.S. government will invest over USD 15 million by 2013. The U.S. is also enhancing the security at facilities storing radiological sources.

¶6. (SBU) Bulgaria has signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, a regional multilateral treaty aimed at taking effective measures to prevent terrorism and to counter public provocation to commit terrorist offenses and recruitment and training for terrorism.

¶7. (SBU) Bulgaria is a member of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and participates in GICNT activities and conferences. As a member, Bulgaria has committed to provide political support to strengthen and implement the Statement of Principles, which aims to prevent nuclear terrorism on a determined and systematic basis.

¶8. (SBU) In November the new center-right GERB government achieved a major success with the passage of two bills designed to overhaul the structure and operation of the Ministry of Interior and the agency responsible for counterterrorism, the State Agency for National Security (DANS). The two pieces of legislation eliminate duplication of effort and unclear responsibilities, making it easier for them to cooperate and share information. The DANS amendments explicitly restored the powers of the Financial Intelligence Directorate (FID) to conduct on-site inspections of banks and other financial institutions, and collect "bank secret" information for money laundering and terrorist financing cases. The FID remains located within DANS, but could be moved back into the Ministry of Finance (MoF) or a new organ inside the MoF could be created to coordinate policy and public outreach on money laundering and terrorist finance.

¶9. (SBU) Internal reorganizations notwithstanding, the FID remained vigilant against terrorist financing and continued to cooperate with the USG on identifying and investigating terrorist assets. The FID reliably distributed lists of individuals and organizations linked to terrorism to all of the banks in Bulgaria, the Ministry of Interior, Customs, and the Border Police. The FID has been responsive to all mandated UNSCR-designated terrorist organizations, and has also been supportive and cooperative on USG designated individuals and organizations. The FID has advised the banking sector to use the Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control OFAC website as a reliable information resource for individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. The FID also continues to provide feedback, including information on the response level of Bulgaria's banks, to the U.S. Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, as well as to the Embassy. Assistant Treasury Secretary David Cohen visited Bulgaria in October to discuss money laundering and terrorist finance with high-level Bulgarian officials, all of whom pledged their efforts to combat terrorist finance.

¶10. (SBU) Neither the United States nor Bulgaria requested

the extradition of suspected terrorists for prosecution during 2009. In 2003 and 2007, the United States and Bulgaria signed a Mutual Legal Assistance treaty (MLA) providing for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, as well as a new Extradition Treaty, providing for the extradition of Bulgarian nationals. The MLA, which is part of a larger U.S.-EU Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement, and the Extradition Treaty, were ratified and implemented in May, allowing for the extradition of criminals for new types of crimes, including terrorism. The constitution prohibits the extradition of Bulgarian nationals as a general rule, although such extraditions can be executed where an international bilateral treaty is in force. Bulgaria extradites Bulgarian nationals to all other EU member states. In addition, Bulgaria is a signatory to the Council of Europe's Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism.

¶11. (SBU) Bulgaria's religious leaders, including the leaders of the nation's Muslim community, continued to speak out strongly against extremism and terrorism.
SUTTON